

Testimony before the Joint Committees of Insurance and Real Estate
and Public Health
March 15, 2021
SB 1022 An Act Concerning Telehealth
HB 5596 An Act Concerning Telehealth
Doris Maldonado

Good morning Senator Lesser, Rep Wood, Senator Daugherty-Abrams and
Rep. Steinberg as well as members of the Insurance and Real Estate and
Public Health Committees.
My name is Doris Maldonado and I am a registered Latina voter in West Hartford.

I am here to testify regarding SB 1022 and HB 5596 An Act Concerning
Telehealth. As the Statewide Bilingual Health Information Specialist for PATH P2P Family
Voices CT and National Family Voices Cultural Responsiveness Telehealth Team, I offer more
than professional expertise.

Telehealth saved my son last year post surviving a false negative COVID test, 4 deaths and my
two electrical shock treatments to me heart (electrocardioversions). I am a person with
disabilities, adoptive mother of 17 year twins with special needs and thriving toddler. We are
telehealth consumers. Between my children and I, we have over 15 physical and mental health
disabilities resulting in being immunocompromised and adversely impacted. After 16 days
dreading my sons worsening conditions in March-immediately after the world shut down, I was
Orphaned and blindsided by my mother's death in April.

Telehealth HAS ALWAYS BEEN ESSENTIAL to persons with disabilities.
Health access **IS AN ESSENTIAL human and civil right**. Our communities remain disparaged
by health, housing, food, education and employment insecurities. Without health, the rest have
become a pipe dream further ostracizing our marginalized.

My son and I suffer with very tangible fears of contamination and trauma daily.
Telehealth has decreased the overwhelming fear, when it's not adding to anxiety because of
lapsed internet bandwidth, adequate devices and funding to maintain communication. Because
of it they can continue classes, therapy and medical appointments as do I and youth that I assist
with special needs.

Our increased providers, educational and family counseling along with access to peer and
support groups has helped band aid our challenges beyond the days when WE WERE forgotten
& remanded to isolation.

What is health without access? I am able to OFFER a nationally launched Family Voices
Telehealth webinar series at no expense to families. Equity-Centered Telehealth empowers
dignity when WE know how we will participate in our care & decision-making.

I've dedicated over 25 years to amplifying the voices as a community advocate for the marginalized and was recognized as one of the 2020 top 50 Latino Leaders in CT as a Community Leader and 2020 Hispanic Women's Leadership Award. I've had the honor of being featured on Identidad Latina, NBC Univision, El Show de Analeh and CT Latino News regarding the health disparities among marginalized Latinos, disabled and youth in foster care. I've served as: Keep the Promise Coalition Co-Chair, USH Co-Chair Accessibility & Inclusion Ministry, Children in Placement guardian ad litem, GHIAA, Mental Health CT Policy Committee, CT Children's Medical Center Family Advisory Council & Behavioral Team, CT DD Council Lifecourse Linguistics Ambassador & Board, Bureau of Education Special Education State Advisory Council Legislative Committee, Yale PRCH Latino Colectivo, CT Family First Prevention Community Team & QRTP, CT 2020 Census Complete Count Committee, CT Emergency Support Function (ESF) #15 (Public Information and External Affairs) Diverse Communities & Disabilities Task Force, Annie Courtney Foundation and Police Accountability Taskforce: Disabilities and Youth Subcommittees.

Will YOU help me put us ALL on the right PATH? Gracias.

Sincerely,
Doris Maldonado